



Press Release

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## 2016 Right Livelihood Awards Uphold Fundamental Human Rights and Values in the Face of War and Repression

The Laureates of this year's [Right Livelihood Award](#), widely referred to as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize', have been announced today in Stockholm, Sweden.

This year's Laureates are:

Syria Civil Defence (The White Helmets), *'for their outstanding bravery, compassion and humanitarian engagement in rescuing civilians from the destruction of the Syrian civil war'*. It is the first time that a Right Livelihood Award goes to a Laureate from Syria.

Egypt's Mozn Hassan and Nazra for Feminist Studies, *'for asserting the equality and rights of women in circumstances where they are subject to ongoing violence, abuse and discrimination'*.

Russia's Svetlana Gannushkina, *'for her decades-long commitment to promoting human rights and justice for refugees and forced migrants, and tolerance among different ethnic groups'*.

Cumhuriyet, a leading independent newspaper in Turkey, *'for their fearless investigative journalism and commitment to freedom of expression in the face of oppression, censorship, imprisonment and death threats'*.

The announcement was made at the Swedish Foreign Office International Media Centre by Ole von Uexkull, Executive Director, and Marianne Andersson, Board Member of the Right Livelihood Award Foundation, following the decision by an international Jury that considered 125 nominations from 50 countries.

Ole von Uexkull commented: "This year's Right Livelihood Award Laureates confront some of the most pressing global issues head-on — be it war, freedom of speech, women's rights or the plight of migrants. With the 2016 award, we do not only celebrate their courage, compassion and commitment; we also celebrate the success of their work, against all odds, and the real difference they are making in the world today".



Established in 1980, the Right Livelihood Award honours and supports courageous people and organisations offering visionary and exemplary solutions to the root causes of global problems.

As of today, there are 166 Laureates from 68 countries. This year's laureates receive a cash award of SEK 3 million (EUR 315,000), equally shared among the four.

**For more information about the Right Livelihood Award and this year's Laureates, or if you wish to arrange an interview with any of them, please contact:**

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High-quality photo and video materials are available from: [www.rightlivelihood.org/2016](http://www.rightlivelihood.org/2016)  
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#RightLivelihood2016 #AlternativeNobel

#### **Editors Notes:**

#### **About the Award**

Presented in Stockholm since 1980, the **Right Livelihood Award** is usually shared by four recipients. The prize money is for ongoing successful work, never for personal use.

In addition to presenting the annual award, the Right Livelihood Award Foundation also supports the work of its Laureates, particularly those whose lives may be in danger due to the nature of their activities.

The Right Livelihood Award is not an award for the world's political, scientific or economic elite, but an award for the people and their work and struggles for a better future. The Right Livelihood Award accepts proposals from everyone through an open nomination process.

The award is named after the Buddhist concept of Right Livelihood, which encourages people to make their living in an ethical way that respects other people and the natural world.



## About the Laureates

Popularly known as **The White Helmets, Syria Civil Defence** are a group of 3,000 volunteers from local communities in Syria, both men and women, who have risked their lives to save anyone from the rubble of buildings destroyed in the civil war. Bakers, tailors, salespersons, teachers – they have become trained fire-fighters, search and rescue workers and medics, directly saving over 60,000 lives.

A lifeline and a rare source of hope for the besieged civilian population, the White Helmets also assist in the reconstruction of damaged public infrastructure, and educate the population on safety measures to take during an aerial attack. Their deep commitment to humanitarian action has drawn international attention to the plight of Syria's citizens and the devastation caused by barrel bombs, and they remain outspoken in calling for an end to the hostilities in the country.

They are the subject of a Netflix short documentary "The White Helmets", released on September 16, which follows three members of the group in their training and work.

**Mozn Hassan** is an Egyptian feminist and human rights defender. Nazra for Feminist Studies, the organisation she founded in 2007, has documented human rights violations and coordinated the response to the alarming number of sexual assaults on women participating in public protests during and after the Egyptian revolution of 2011, ensuring that survivors received medical, psychological and legal support.

Additionally, Nazra engaged in coalitions of women's groups who successfully lobbied for the inclusion of women's rights in Egypt's 2014 Constitution and ensured the passage of amendments to the Egyptian Penal Code to expand the definition of sexual crimes to include sexual harassment. Believing that feminism and gender are political and social issues affecting freedom and development in all societies, Hassan and Nazra mentor young women in politics, including candidates for parliamentary, municipal and union elections from across Egypt's political spectrum. They also organise an annual Feminist School that introduces young men and women to gender issues.

**Svetlana Gannushkina** is one of the most accomplished leaders of the human rights movement in Russia today. Through the organisation that she founded and heads – the Civic Assistance Committee – she has provided free legal support, humanitarian aid and



education to over 50,000 migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons since 1990. Her personal courage and successful advocacy in the Russian courts and the European Court of Human Rights has prevented the forced repatriation of migrants from Russia to Central Asian countries where they would have almost certainly been subject to imprisonment and torture. As a member of the Russian Presidential Human Rights Council from 2002-2012, Gannushkina successfully advocated for the law on refugees to be amended allowing for over two million persons to be granted Russian citizenship. Passionate about the transformative power of education, Gannushkina has brought repeated challenges to the Russian Supreme Court to grant all children in Russia, including migrants and refugees, the right to attend public schools. She has been outspoken in drawing public attention to human rights violations in the conflict regions, notably the Caucasus.

**Cumhuriyet** is one of the most important independent public interest newspapers in contemporary Turkey. Since 1924, it has been committed to upholding the principle of freedom of the press against all odds; its staff have taken immense personal risks and have suffered assassinations and imprisonment to remain outspoken in reporting on issues of human rights, gender equality, secularism and protection of the environment. Cumhuriyet's stellar investigative journalism has broken numerous stories around important events, placing the Turkish government under public scrutiny. At a time when freedom of expression in Turkey is under increasing threat, Cumhuriyet proves that the voice of democracy will not be silenced.